THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

A SYMPOSIUM

Reprinted from the Welfare Magazine

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THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

A SYMPOSIUM

Compiled by members of the Faculty

ILLINOIS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
JACKSONVILLE, ILLINOIS

R. W. Woolston, Managing Officer

Reprinted from the Welfare Magazine

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THE ILLINOIS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Robert W. Woolston, Managing Officer

Jacksonville, Illinois

The Illinois School for the Blind is located at Jacksonville, and can be reached by the Wabash, Chicago and Alton, Jacksonville and Havana, and Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroads.

The Purpose of the School

It is the purpose of the school to give to all blind children in the state, between the ages of six and twenty-one years, who are educable, and also those whose vision is so impaired that they cannot attend the public schools, a good, thorough and practicable education; to make them independent, and, so far as possible, self-supporting men and women.

The Literary School

The school maintains a Kindergarten Department where little children only five or six years of age are received.

The Elementary School embraces eight years' work which corresponds to that of the public school.

The four year High School course is also like that of the public schools, excepting Chemistry, which is not taught. Pupils who complete the High School course may enter colleges and universities.

Conservatory of Music

Supplementary to the academic course is the Conservatory of Music, where instruction is given in piano, violin, voice, pipe organ, and wind instruments. Pupils may carry a course in music in addition to the literary course. Many pupils become very proficient in music and make it their life's work.

Industrial Department

Courses are offered in piano tuning, dictaphone operating, furniture making, basketry, weaving carpets, rugs and fine fabrics, and broom making.

The courses are arranged and the pupils are classified so that each one shall derive the greatest benefits from his attendance. All pupils are urged to enroll as early as possible while the sense perception is keen and the greatest progress can be made.

Braille

The American Braille and the Revised American Braille systems are used in this school. All the literary and music lessons are given in one or the other of these systems.

Expenses

The school pays for tuition, text books, table board, room rent, laundry, medical attendance, etc., for all pupils in attendance.

Parents will please furnish their children with four changes of washable clothing, two suits of clothes or two Sunday dresses, and two pairs of shoes.

Each article of clothing should bear the pupil's name plainly written with indelible ink. The clothing should be the same as that worn in public schools. No uniforms are worn in this school.

Parents will also pay for their children's transportation to and from the school, for dental work, barber work, shoe repairing, postage, etc.

Vacations

The school opens each year during the second week in September. At Christmas time there will be a vacation of two full weeks, when all pupils return to their respective homes. The school year closes early in June for the summer vacation.

Application blanks for the admittance of pupils to this school may be had on request.

Very sincerely yours,
Robert W. Woolston, Managing Officer.

Please address all communications to the Managing Officer

THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

(A Symposium)

By Several Teachers
Illinois School For The Blind, Jacksonville

IT is the province of the State School for the Blind to educate the blind child and the child having only partial sight as the public school educates the seeing or normal child. To accomplish this with the best results, it is necessary for the child to enter our kindergarten department as early as five or six years of age. We, as teachers, realize how hard it is for parents to send little ones away to school when they are "nothing but babies," but if they could see the loving care that is given to them by the housemothers and the rapid development under trained teachers; if they could see the happy groups of children playing games, reading, writing and so forth, they would have no compunction as to what is best for the child. Very little is expected of the blind child in the home and the parents of such children seldom realize, unless their attention is called to it, that their child can be and should be as well educated as his seeing brother or sister. To accomplish this with the best results and greatest speed in the school course, he should begin his school training in the kindergarten. The first five years of a child's life are the most formative. If he is sent to school before bad habits of inattention are formed, he should progress, by methods especially adapted to the blind, as a seeing child does, a grade a year from the kindergarten through the high school, finishing with an education that enables him to enter college or to take his place in the community with the workers of the world.

Have you ever visited a school for the blind where there was no kindergarten department?

If you have, you will have noticed the result of parental love that has caused a child to be unable to feed himself, dress himself, or to be independent in any way. Although the parents mean this in the greatest kindness, they are doing that child a great harm. For something is lacking —a foundation is needed, and that foundation is a kindergarten. The first thing a kindergartner does is to correct any timidity a child has acquired, and then teach direction and self-reliance to him. After that his sense of rhythm and of play follow closely. Muscular control is taught through handwork and games. The memory is trained through kindergarten stories and songs. This training of the memory is an essential part of a child's early education, and the

younger he is when he enters kindergarten the easier his later education will be.

All normal children are interested in seeing things, doing things, talking about things and playing about things. So are the blind—they like to do the same things that sighted children do. At the end of a year in kindergarten a child has developed rhythm; he has learned to skip, march, gallop and beat time to music. He has become acquainted with *Mother Goose* and can tell or dramatize his favorite stories. In handwork he has learned to use his hands skillfully, which means so much to him, not only in his reading and writing but in his industrial arts in the upper grades. He has been taught to love his work and to be a respecter of others.

After a year in the kindergarten where the blind child, as well as the sighted child, has learned to use his hands, he enters the first grade to learn to use his mind in coordination with his hands. Memory work is stressed here through stories, songs, verses and numbers.

The child who enters school at the school age, forming constructive habits in using his mind and body, makes more progress than the child who is kept at home where nothing is expected of him until he is eight or ten years of age.

Braille reading and writing are started in the primary and the child who has not learned to use his hands, generally, has great difficulty in using the slate and stylus. Because much repetition is necessary in this beginning reading and writing the memory is strengthened. Concentration is an important faculty that must be developed in order to progress. Lack of concentration is one of the problems that we primary teachers have to solve.

The younger the child is when beginning to read and write the sooner he develops concentration. With this development comes the great joy of being able to read the stories that his sighted brothers and sisters read and to write letters home telling what he has learned to do in school.

II

One of the important problems in teaching blind children is to ascertain their exact concepts of the ordinary objects of everyday life, and then, whenever necessary, to correct and clarify these erroneous mental pictures. An inquiry into the child's ideas along these lines will often disclose crude and imperfect views of common objects, due to the fact that he has not been sufficiently urged to ask questions or to use his hands, to make himself acquainted with the things which lie directly about him.

However, when one considers the comparatively limited means at the disposal of the blind child for acquiring concrete imagery, this state of affairs is not unnatural. Therefore, to overcome this handicap as far as is possible, the arithmetic, language, and geography recitations may frequently be made subjects for lessons in sense perceptions.

To carry out this work adequately, the classroom should be provided with a set of toy or stuffed animals, with which the children should be thoroughly familiarized. A miscellaneous collection of weights, measures, different

fabrics—anything in fact which will stimulate the child to use his hands to acquire correct and concrete images for himself—will be of infinite value. Moreover, the child's interest in growing things should be aroused, so that he may wish to learn for himself of the plant and vegetable life about him.

Sense perception, therefore, should be a vital part of the classroom work, for it is the only substitute for pictures and illustrations in schools for the blind, and often tends to rouse children from the sluggishness and indifference into which some of them fall, because of a lack of outside stimuli and motor activity in general. In this form of objective teaching, parents can be and often are of infinite assistance in helping the blind child to overcome his timidity and self-consciousness by urging him to use his hands as a medium of acquiring knowledge. Time spent in sense perception work, both in and out of the classroom, will train the hands, stimulate the mental faculties and enrich the child's life many fold. In geography, these pupils study ways of living and working, which differ in form, but agree in principle, among all men. Men are related to the earth and to each other largely through the products of the earth and their exchange.

The questions of direction and location are important and the study of globes, maps and plans a central feature in the teaching of geography. The blind child needs, as does the sighted child, to develop ideas of proportion, form and space. To this end should be used every adaptation of methods and devices employed by the sighted teacher of seeing children. All these means assist in the development of the faculty of visualization.

Excellent maps are found in Braille print geographies. Others made in the schoolroom supplement the use of these, and the work done on them corresponds to the map-drawing of the sighted pupil.

In the teaching of location and direction on the school grounds, a large map four feet by four feet was used, and the plan of the school was drawn according to scale. Most of this work was done by the pupils. The drives were made of coarse sandpaper, the walks of a finer sandpaper, fences of very small pegs, and the buildings were wooden forms made in the manual training department. As our land is in the form of a trapezoid, it is possible to show, in a simple way, the difference in the angles or corners of the grounds.

Maps of the town of Jacksonville, showing familiar places, as some of the principal streets and their intersections, the schools, churches, the post office and parks, were made by the pupils.

Maps of the State of Illinois were made in the same way, and the homes of all the pupils in the class were shown, thus developing the subject of transportation by rail and by hard roads.

A map of beaver board, twenty inches by thirty-four inches, has the United States outlined upon it, with the different groups of states clearly indicated. The principal rivers are represented by cord glued on, the lakes by sandpaper, the large cities by wooden beads of various sizes. Some of the leading productions of each group are shown, indicating the important work in each locality. Each

pupil has one of these maps for his own use.

On six inch Rand-McNally globes the land formations have been reproduced in plaster with the mountainous regions of the earth in relief. One of these globes is in the hands of each pupil and from it he learns the size, shape and motions of the earth. The subjects of direction, latitude and longitude are also presented to him. He learns about the poles, the equator, the zones and circles, the location of continents and oceans and their relation to each other.

In the teaching of map work in the sixth grade, where we spend almost the entire year in the study of the United States, the large, sectional, wooden maps have been found most beneficial. Most of the maps in the Braille texts are too small to enable the pupils to gather correct ideas without the aid of the larger one.

At the outset of the study of each group of states, the states in the section are taken from the map and given to the pupils. They will, perhaps, know only one or two of the group. As the states are passed around the class the pupils are taught each state and they learn to remember it solely by its shape. The pupils are next asked to place the states that they hold in the correct position in the map. They often require aid at first, but soon grasp the idea that the states must "fit" properly.

Later, the entire group is given to an individual pupil. He is required to put them in the map, unassisted, if possible. If he requires aid he must try again another day. The pupils often work better on the map outside of school hours if they know they are to be timed in class. Thus, by the time the western states are finished in this manner, any pupil can put the entire map together in from five to thirty minutes, depending on ability. But, in order to do this, he must necessarily have obtained a good idea of the size, shape and location of each state.

III

The study of grammar in the upper grades must, necessarily, be entirely subjective. A blind child is usually better able to use good English than a seeing child of the same age and grade. The reason is the method of study, which requires a high degree of concentration and results in a high degree of mental development.

The use of signs, facial expressions and gestures being denied the blind, they must depend upon proper verbal expression to convey thought. Diagram analysis, underlining, the use of different kinds of print, and similar aids, are impossible. The mind must supply these pictures for the brain. In analysis the pupil must read a sentence thoroughly and retain the entire wording throughout his recitation, whereas the seeing child may frequently refer to his text or to the blackboard.

The modern tendency is to teach a child to use a text as a reference. For blind pupils, this method is not practicable because of the size and number of Braille text books to be handled. They soon learn that it is much better to master a rule or definition than to review it at each recurrence of its need. This leads to a more concentrated study and a better retention of facts.

Since eighth grade grammar is the final preparation for advanced English and foreign languages, the list of carefully memorized facts proves a valuable asset when the high school courses are taken up.

The rapidly widening outlook of teachers of English has led to the building up of the ideal of a well-balanced course of instruction, in the secondary schools, in the language and literature of the mother-tongue. The essentials of this course are the following: (1) The ability of the student to understand the thoughts of others, whether spoken or written; (2) the ability to express his own thoughts adequately through spoken or written words; and (3) the ability to gain pleasure and profit through his native literature. This involves training in grammar and rhetoric as well as practice in composition, both oral and written. The development of the power to appreciate literature involves not only the reading of literature with that object in view, but some knowledge of the history of literature, a familiar acquaintance with a certain number of literary masterpieces of various epochs, and a realization of the characteristic traits of the race or the nation which are revealed in the literature.

With these three essential elements, or aims clearly in mind, we have conducted our four-year course of instruction in English. The fact that our students are accepted in the colleges and universities of the state, with their work in English fully accredited, and that they are holding responsible office positions, in competition with sighted people, is sufficient proof that the work in English is satisfactory and on a par with that taught in accredited high schools of the state.

Our students have been handicapped in their study of English, in that they have no English dictionary in Braille, nor have they had the use of the newer texts and annotated copies of the classics, with their copious notes and fine historical background. But these very limitations have made them more resourceful and independent and have given them a real and ready command over their knowledge and faculties.

They have had one great advantage in that they have had access to only the finest in literature, the type which is a constant source of inspiration and a very great aid toward the development of noble character—the final aim of all education.

Two years of high school Latin are taught in our course. The work done by the students covers practically the same ground as that covered by sighted students in accredited high schools.

In the first year, we endeavor to secure certain practical results, while establishing a thorough basis for further study. The direct and more restricted aim is the learning of Latin by the help of English and of English by the help of Latin; the broader aim is to impart even to the beginner some vivid suggestion of the civilization attained in Rome.

As over half the words in the English language are derived directly or indirectly from Latin and as nothing but a tolerable familiarity with Latin roots can prevent a stupid misuse of words derived from Latin, great emphasis is placed on word formation and derivation. Since there is no English dictionary in Braille, a knowledge

of Latin roots is of the utmost importance to our students in the widening and enriching of their English vocabularies.

In the second year, the class is required to translate Cæsar's Gallic War and to write Latin prose composition based on the text. This translation must be done without the aid of a Latin grammar and without the aid of notes and grammatical references always found in printed texts. Although this has meant greater work for the students, it has increased their resourcefulness and has cultivated a greater independence and self-reliance in translating.

It is hoped, however, that, for the sake of saving the pupil's time, the *Revised Braille edition of Caesar* will contain notes, vocabulary and grammatical references so arranged that easy reference may be made from one part of the text to the others.

General Science has become a valuable addition to the list of high school subjects; and there is no place where is can be taught so beneficially as in high schools for the blind where pupils have so little knowledge of the different sciences, scientific material and the forces of nature. Nothing will more effectually dispel erroneous ideas concerning the natural world than a course of this kind, if instruction is given by a competent, painstaking and ingenious teacher.

The classes should be small—never more than ten pupils where recitations are thirty or forty minutes long. Adequate facilities and materials should be provided and a laboratory fitted up where apparatus could be set up for pupils to examine at their leisure. In some cases special models should be constructed for the use of the blind and, in most cases, they will have to be contrived by the ingenuity of the teacher.

At the Illinois School for the Blind, general science is taught, not only with the purpose of giving the pupil a correct knowledge of the material in the text, but, also, by illustrations and experiments, to acquaint him with many facts which will be of practical use to him. Our classes have been large—fifteen to eighteen—and our laboratory periods comparatively short. For these reasons it has been demonstrated that it is a waste of time, especially where a large percentage of the pupils are totally blind, to have them perform the experiments. The plan that has been adopted is for the teacher to explain the apparatus and, whenever possible, to let each pupil examine it to show the proper relation of the parts and the use of each. The teacher then performs the experiment and tells what is happening. By this method, there is little time wasted, less danger and less likelihood that the pupils will form false impressions.

IV

Some distinguished modern educators advocate that we make less use of visual images and more use of words. The blind student is not at as great a disadvantage in the study of typewriting as is some other subjects since it is now universally taught by touch. Psychologists tell us that we gain knowledge four times as readily through the eye as through the other senses, and an occasional glance at the keyboard or chart is undoubtedly a great help in impressing the loca-

tion of characters. Deprived of this aid, one must scientifically analyze the keyboard, patiently memorizing the position of each symbol by means of constant drill and repetition, not forgetting that verbal memorizing is an indispensable feature in sound education, and that the calling of the characters by name, as they are struck, makes doubly forceful their impression and establishes a habit of fingering correctly. Concise presentation at the beginning is of utmost importance to insure ease and proficiency in the art of typewriting. Those who attempt to train themselves or receive help from others not well prepared to teach, are losing time, undoubtedly forming habits that only much laborious practice and deep concentration will correct.

Any one of ordinary intelligence, whether blind or not, unless physically handicapped, readily learns the keyboard in a short time when systematically instructed and, by constant and varied exercise, this knowledge becomes ingrained to the extent that the muscles respond involuntarily.

The typist who takes dictation well will unquestionably become a good dictaphone operator with a little practice. Many blind girls hold positions which make them financially independent, increase their self-respect, and create a spirit of optimism and encouragement that serves as a sustaining influence upon their life and character.

It does not require exceptional ability for the blind student to become a good typist or dictaphone operator, but, rather, untiring devotion to the development of the ability he has, whether much or little. Such training is an inestimable part of youthful acquisition, especially for the blind.

The teaching of the blind differs in many respects from that of the sighted. Much individual training is required, for, in many instances, it is through the hand rather than the eye that things are seen. The blind child is deprived of many out-of-door sports and amusements which serve in the proper development of the hands. The pupil should be closely observed and every effort made to determine his capability. The training should be simplified to the fullest extent, gradually advancing to the more difficult. Should the pupil, within a reasonable length of time, fail to show the necessary progress or be unable to master the work, he should be given a try-out at something else. No child should be dismissed from hand training until every effort has been spent; it is only by this training that the proper development of the hands is obtained and with it gracefulness. The greater the interest, the more marked is the accomplishment. After a pupil has reached a certain age and has expressed a willingness to pursue vocational training, he should be so trained as to assist in the earning of a future livelihood.

After years of experience in teaching basketry and sewing to blind children, we have concluded that for such work several very necessary requirements on the part of the instructor are: an even temper, an inexhaustible supply of patience, and the ability to use words accurately and in a manner that is descriptive. One may think one's powers of expression quite adequate to any situation until faced by

the problem of telling a group of sightless children, in words alone, without the aid of gestures, diagrams or demonstrative material held before the class, how a certain project is to be carried out.

In attempting to teach any phase of handwork one must produce in the child's mind a clear image of the process involved by means of a concise description.

In instances where the child's hands may be guided through the movements, or an article which illustrates the point may be shown, one enlists the aid of the sense of touch.

It is well for the instuctor to bear in mind that it is very easy for a blind child to become weakly dependent on others. To avoid this she should resist the temptation to help the child out of small difficulties in order to hasten the work, and should determine not to do things for a child which he can be trained to do himself. A little extra time spent in the beginning in inculcating habits of self-reliance will save much time and many steps later, and will help to make the child an independent being.

Every child should be thoroughly grounded in the use of all equipment which the work requires, and one should insist on its being used correctly. Weak, half-hearted attempts should be discouraged. It is fatal to allow the blind child to feel that anything but his best effort is acceptable.

Handwork in all its phases offers a fine opportunity for training the sense of touch and developing a sense of line, form and size which might otherwise remain undeveloped. One should make the most of the opportunity by setting a high standard and insisting on the final products being up to standard.

The object we work for in the Industrial Arts department of the Illinois School for the Blind is to make healthy, intelligent men of character who are able to do well some form of useful work.

Manual Training work as a whole has two sides—the educational side and the trade side.

The third grade children have toy-making and the most elementary woodwork; the fourth grade, beginning basketry; fifth grade, basketry; and the sixth grade, woodwork. The training throughout these four grades is purely educational. The main objective is to train the hand and the mind to work together. This also acquaints them with the tools, their uses, and with materials used. Both geography and arithmetic are readily correlated with basketry and woodwork. While no stress is made from the trade side, eight of our boys made baskets at home during the summer, clearing from $40 to $80 each.

The work of the Junior High School and High School deals principally with the trade side. Advanced basketry and fibre furniture-making are taught. Briefly—(1) materials are studied, (2) the boys use their energy for valuable work—to become efficient workmen and to produce a well-made article that people will buy.

Several of the boys work in fibre furniture factories; others keep busy with orders all summer. One of the boys has built a miniature set of furniture, made to measurement, for display samples to further his business. The real aim of this is to build char-

acter, and to prepare the individual for service.

Physical Training for the blind is very essential in that it develops in them rhythm, alertness, poise and self-confidence. They learn and enjoy games, exercises, dances, apparatus work and athletics as any normal child does and thus their health is improved, their minds made more active, and their social life expanded.

Beginning in the kindergarten and primary grades, the children are taught marching, rhythm, singing games, and simple folk dances.

Through these they gain confidence in themselves and learn to be thoughtful of others. The primary boys begin easy apparatus work, such as climbing the pole and rope, and exercising on the traveling ladder.

The intermediate grades are given calisthenics and athletics, more advanced folk dances, and apparatus work is made more difficult. Games hold an important place here, as through them ease is given to the self-conscious child, strength to the nervous, awakening to the dull; and last, but not least, the spirit of a gracious victor or a good loser is developed.

Through the grammar grades and high school more stress is laid on the calisthenic work. The girls are also taught figure marching, aesthetic dancing and pantomime, while the boys' attention is turned to more difficult apparatus work and athletics. Through the dancing and pantomime, gracefulness and poise are developed, an item which is very necessary to the blind student. Through the apparatus and athletics the boys gain strength and self-assurance.

PART II

EVER since the education of the blind has been well organized and schools for the purpose established, instruction in music has been a very important part of the work. Evidence that this is the case in the Illinois School for the Blind is shown by the fact that twenty-five percent of the teachers on its faculty are instructors of music, a much larger percentage than would be found in a school of similar size for sighted pupils.

The late Charles W. Elliott of Harvard University placed music at the head of the list of subjects to be used in schools for the purpose of training the mind. Aside from this broad and general reason, there are several other reasons why music is, and should be, stressed in a school for the blind. Three of these are here noted. First, the cultural benefit derived from music study is unquestioned, and as some of the other means of cultural improvement used in schools for the sighted, such as drawing and the study of masterpieces of painting, cannot be used in schools for the blind, music must be employed the more extensively for the purpose. Second, the understanding and appreciation of good music are a source of enjoyment and happiness both in youth and after life; and as blind people are cut off from such avenues of uplifting pleasures as pictures and the beauties of natural scenery they are entitled to this one. The more complete an individual's musical education, the greater will be his capacity for enjoyment of and expression through music. Third, some blind pupils can be trained in music to such an extent that they will be enabled later to use it as a means of livelihood. The number of such, though small in proportion to the total number of pupils receiving instruction in music, is yet sufficient to warrant the emphasis given to music. Blind persons are engaged in teaching and performing and as organists in churches and theaters, as well as in other fields of musical endeavor throughout the entire country.

Teachers of music in schools for the blind should take these reasons, as well as the talents and capacities of their pupils, into consideration as having a bearing upon the direction of their work. Parents of the pupils should also weigh them that they may better

know what to expect of their children in a musical way. While all may not become teachers or performers, they may derive great benefit from the study of music in some other way.

V

The course in music offered to our students includes Piano, Violin and Orchestral Instruments, Voice, Organ, Chorus Work, Theory and History of Music. A child may begin the study of the piano or violin at a very early age and if he makes sufficient advancement may continue the subject throughout his entire school course.

All reading of music by the blind is done by means of the Braille system. The system of Braille used in music is similar to that employed in the printing of literature, each musical character being represented by a combination of raised dots.

Every character contained in the staff notation is included in the Braille musical system. Time-marks, key signatures, accidentals, expression marks, notes of the various values, all have their means of representation in the Braille by simple signs which are easily mastered. The Braille notation, however, is not strictly on a parallel with the staff in all particulars, certain differences in arrangement being made for the purpose of simplifying the system. For example, in order to avoid complication, the keyboard is divided into seven octaves, thus making it necessary to represent only the seven notes of the scale. In this manner the location of any note is indicated by the octave mark placed before it. Chords are written by the use of intervals, only the principal note being given, and the others reckoned according to the intervals indicated. In piano music the two-hand parts of each measure are written parallel, the left-hand part being placed directly under the right, as in the staff. Music for all instruments is written in the Braille system.

In our School for the Blind, classes for the teaching of Braille notation are organized among the children at an early age, this training being given as a supplement to their early course at the instrument. As soon as the child has had sufficient preliminary training of the hand to prepare him for simple pieces, his knowledge of Braille comes into use; all such material, in connection with the study of any instrument, is always learned from the printed page.

Since the fingers must be employed for the reading of raised print, it is obvious that the pupil cannot play anything which he has not first memorized. The memorizing is done by reading a measure with one hand and playing with the other, repeating the passage until it is fixed in the memory. The process is then reversed until the other hand-part is learned. Afterward the two parts are combined. All music, from the simplest compositions for beginners to the most difficult works of the masters, must be memorized in this way; but the process soon becomes a very simple one, continued training making it possible for the blind person to memorize very rapidly.

The same system is used by teachers without sight in giving instruction to either blind or sighted persons, the teacher following from the printed page while the pupil plays.

Thus the Braille musical system is in all respects as complete and as satisfactory as the staff system, and answers all purposes for which that notation is ordinarily employed.

VI

Many people are of the opinion that the blind child must be taught to play the piano by ear. But this is not the case. While the blind student, reading the Braille page with his fingers, lacks the ability to visualize the whole page of music, yet the Braille system of notation has been so improved that, if the pupil be apt in his reading, the musical thought may flow intelligently under the reading finger.

The sooner the blind child begins the study of piano after he has begun his study of Braille music notation the easier it is for both teacher and pupil, since the newly learned signs should be put into actual use at once if they are to be fixed clearly in the child's mind.

In this school the average child has an opportunity to take private lessons on the piano when he has reached the third grade. By that time he is proficient enough in the reading of Braille literary notation to undertake the study of Braille music notation.

Correct reading is the first and most important step in teaching the blind child, and this necessarily includes a complete understanding of the signs he is reading. From the very inception of study, therefore, it makes for better musicianship on the part of the blind, as of the seeing also, if the child reader is taught to observe every symbol and put its meaning into immediate and strict practice.

One of the distinct difficulties confronting the teacher is the inaptitude of the blind child for acquiring normal position of the hands and rapid location of the notes on the keyboard. Special exercises for correcting these difficulties are invented to suit each pupil's needs, although it is remarkable, even in some instances of blindness from birth, how now and then a student may prove free from such defects. It may take time for the student to overcome these difficulties, but when he is made to feel that he is progressing toward normality, his musicianship is stimulated.

The material used in teaching the blind piano student is exactly the same as that used for a seeing child. The transcription into Braille of new ink publications is continually being done. Also, as is the general practice everywhere in musical training, the child is given the opportunity to appear in public recitals from his first year of study.

The study of piano in the early grades consists of rudiments of music, memory training, ear training, finger technic, elementary studies, scales and simple pieces, and the art of phrasing. As he advances, he studies the works of the great composers, such as Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt and the more modern composers. Added to these he makes a thorough study of all major and minor scales, difficult chord and octave studies, as well as etudes by Cramer, Chopin, and Bach's Inventions and Well Tempered Clavichord.

VII

A number of the pupils of the Conservatory of Music are studying one or more of the stringed or wind instruments. This department offers work in violin, cello, bass viol, flute, clarinet, saxophone, cornet and trombone. In answer to the question "Where do the boys and girls get the instruments?" the school has a limited supply for use in testing each pupil to ascertain whether or not he has any musical ability. If it is found that he has enough talent to continue, he is encouraged to buy his own instrument, as pride in his possession will incite him to do better work. However, it is not a good thing for a pupil to invest in an instrument before such a trial.

The first steps in the study of a stringed instrument are the hardest. A youngster is "hard put to it" to keep up his desire and determination to become a master. The bow will not do what he wants it to do. It wanders down the string to meet the left hand. It jumps the bridge and makes terrible sounds. Since he cannot see, it is especially difficult for him to draw a straight bow. After a while, however, he learns to eliminate unnecessary squeals and to get sounds more nearly musical. To realize the pupil's next difficulty, that of co-ordinating his left-hand work with the right, one need only try tapping his head with one hand and rubbing his chest with the other. Now, tired of exercises, the boy begins to beg for pieces with names to them. Oh, that he were ready for position work! Eventually he does learn his positions. He feels quite superior. At last he has done it. He is in the school orchestra.

The school orchestra has an average membership of sixteen, and as the older members leave school, there are always younger students who have worked hard and are ready to fill the vacancies. This is the ultimate goal of our little friend who struggles so valiantly in the beginning.

The school orchestra has two eighty-minute rehearsals each week, and all parts are thoroughly memorized before these meetings. There are no music racks. There is no baton. There could not be in an orchestra of blind boys and girls. The piano to some degree does the work of the baton, as the director, seated at the piano, may indicate or control by it. In this way excellent ensemble may be obtained. But expression and interpretation are so thoroughly assimilated during rehearsals, that in public very little direction, even by this means, is necessary.

The repertoire is by no means simple. It is varied and includes numbers of unusual merit and difficulty. These must be ready for use on school programs or occasionally at community gatherings. Our present repertoire includes:

Ballet Music from "Faust,"—Gounod
Wedding Day at Troldhaugen, —Grieg
Canzonetta, —D'Ambrosio
None but the Weary Heart —Tschaikowsky
Elegy —Massenet
A Day in Venice —Nevin
Marche from "Lenore" —Raff

VIII

All pupils having promising voices

are given vocal training as early as the age and development of the voice seem to justify so doing.

In the teaching of voice both physical and mental energies are involved and the teacher must give consideration to the pupil's bodily makeup as well as to the mind, and not only to the natural powers, but how these may be improved by training.

One of the first things for a student to realize is that a singer must strive for a perfect carriage of the body. How often in the first lessons do we have to say "chest up" and again "shoulders erect." But it is not long, if the student is interested, before he has formed a habit in the correct way.

He also learns the correct way of breathing, proper use of the diaphragm, and what to do with the hands and feet. Next comes relaxation of jaw, tongue and larynx, that he may in time, with proper placing of the voice, produce the correct tone. The student must realize he is the instrument and the tone has to be made. Here one of the greatest gifts is to see with our ears. Always must one listen, listen, that in time the tone may become round, full, smooth and resonant. In connection with this comes the use of vowels and consonants. The chief point to be remembered in the enunciation (or articulation) of consonants is that the operation in every case must be performed with precision and rapidity. In singing of words and syllables the sound is sustained upon the vowel for much longer duration than is used in speaking.

At this time simple songs are taken up, such as folk songs. These show a fluent style and a comparative absence of skips, that make them practicable for young students, and are easily played in different keys to accommodate the voice. In the meantime, the student becomes familiar with Braille music. Often he has had some piano, and if so, has a better idea of getting acquainted with the music; after reading several measures of melody, then words, more measures of melody and so on, it is not long before melody and words are learned and attention can be given to the working out of correct tone and expression.

Quick songs of lighter character may now come into the repertory and as vocal strength develops, the broader style of song may be taken up.

The student should realize that always the face should reflect the song and it is the work of the teacher to help him to imagine and to make the song real.

The voice should grow to be the spontaneous expression of the student's personality. The impulse to express feeling vocally is universal, as well as the feeling of rhythm. The ardent study of voice may be the means of discovering the soul-force, which, if combined with physical energy, will constitute the distinction of person or personality. The attainment of this conception of what ought to be, this idea, should dominate the blind student in voice training. It tends to lighten trouble, accentuates the joy of living, and helps students to express themselves. In addition to the regular course in voice training in our school, a three years University Course in Graded Singing is given. Braille text-books are given the students, containing all instruction tak-

The fingers are the "eyes" of the blind child who must learn the lessons of the world through the sense of touch. Miniature animals are used to teach him about the creatures around him.

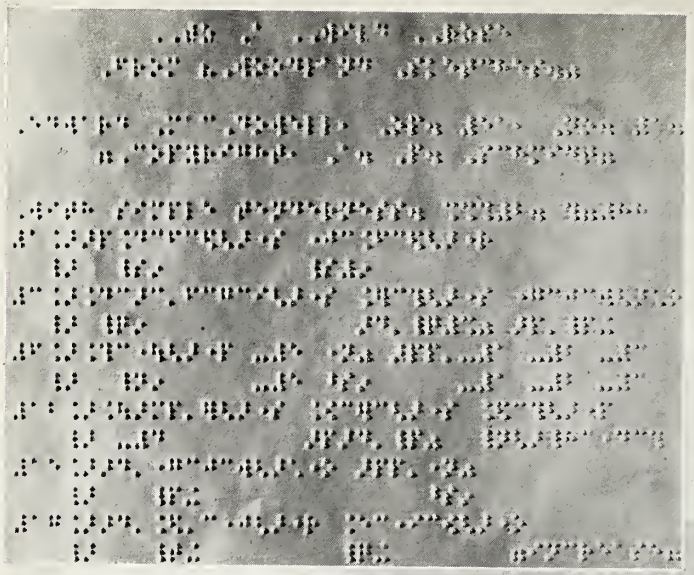
The feathered creatures become their friends, too, as they learn of them through sense perception. After "seeing" the birds with their hands, the blind children model them in clay.

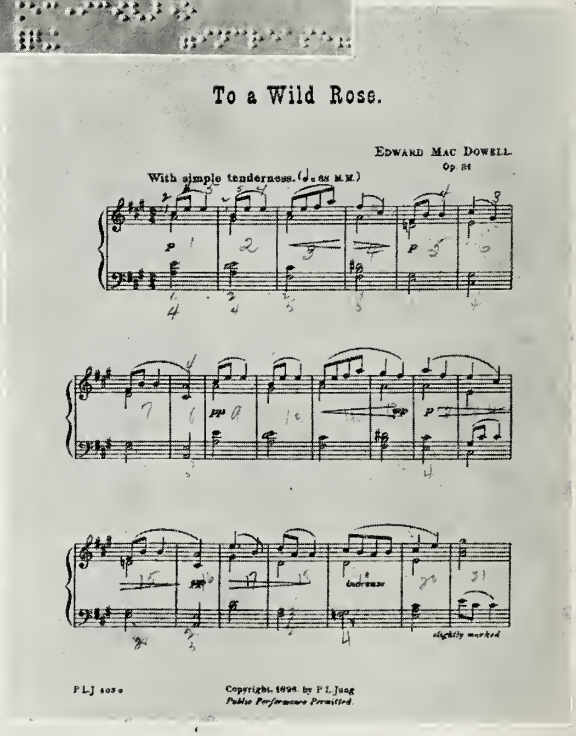
For the faculty of the School for the Blind there is an excellent library.

One of the buildings where classes are conducted at the School for the Blind.

The sense of touch in the blind children becomes keenly developed. Through touch they can distinguish immediately animals, birds, fishes and the like. The little girl in the picture is having a lesson in nature study.

In the commercial class, the pupils of the School for the Blind become expert typists and dictaphone operators. Many graduates are filling splendid positions in this work.





Music is transcribed into Braille for the use of blind pupils. The Illinois School for the Blind has one of the finest catalogues of music in the world. Above is shown the Braille music for "To a Wild Rose." The notes and other musical signs are represented by a code of dots.

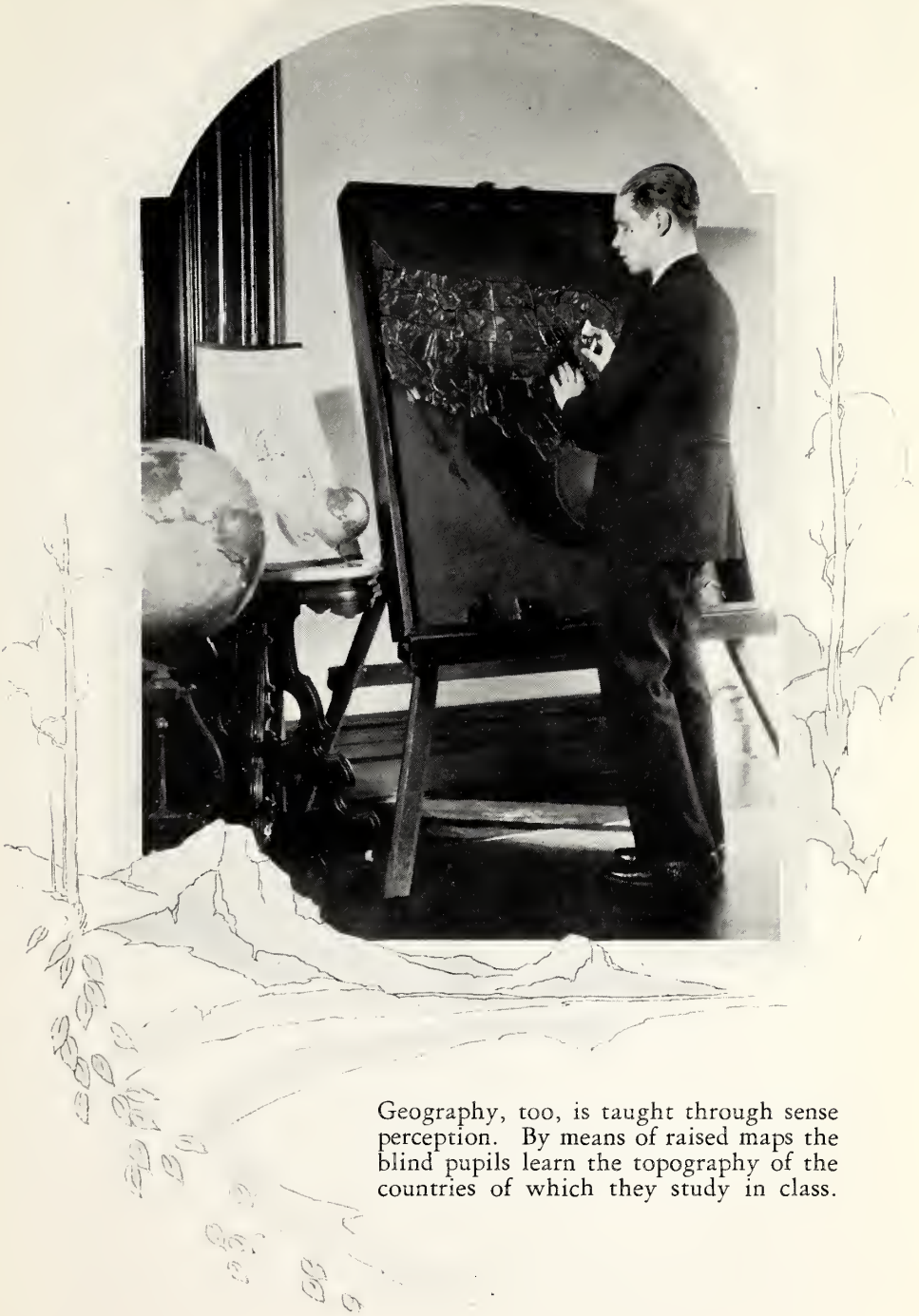
In learning music, the blind pupil reads the Braille with one hand while he plays the notes with the other. Then he reverses this process. All of the music is memorized.

The upper picture shows the machine used to transcribe the Braille music. The Illinois School for the Blind has been responsible for significant improvements in the transcribing of Braille music.

The orchestra at the School for the Blind is a splendid musical organization, which has performed throughout the State and on the radio.

All of the books from which the blind read are printed in Braille. In this system, the alphabet is represented by a series of raised dots. With a group of six dots all of the letters and numbers of the language can be printed.

This little girl tells the time of day by her finger tips. The blind children carry watches with raised numerals and have no difficulty in telling time.



Geography, too, is taught through sense perception. By means of raised maps the blind pupils learn the topography of the countries of which they study in class.

When Abraham Lincoln is being studied in the history class, a bust of the Civil war president, a miniature of his log cabin birthplace and other objects are used by the blind children. Through the fingers they are able to get a picture of Lincoln.

en with the teacher, at each lesson. This eliminates the possibility of forgetting. There is provided also a system of grades and credits as well as oral and written examinations. Recitation papers are graded as in public schools and returned to the students.

It is the aim of the voice department to eliminate teaching by rote as much as possible, giving the student a thorough education in rapid-reading, breathing, tone-production, ear-training, phrasing and a correction of distorted vowel elements.

Pupils having such training are well prepared to teach, this being more important than to be able only to sing a small repertoire.

Instruction for the blind does not differ from that given sighted pupils, only the blind must read from Braille, which makes progress slower.

This standard method brings a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of voice culture, while participation in the student recitals given during the year has a wholesome and broadening effect.

Work in the chorus classes is of great benefit to music students and is required of all pupils in the music department. This work covers a wide range of songs, from the most simple one for the tiny tots, to the difficult work of the great composers, including selections from the operas and oratorios, for the advanced pupils. As the direction of a chorus of blind students must necessarily be done in a very different manner from that of a sighted chorus, one can readily understand that there must be very close application on the part of the students and a tireless energy and unlimited patience on the part of the director. Not only must words and music be thoroughly memorized, but all marks of expression must be kept in the mind. And, as these classes number from ninety to one hundred students each, every phrase of a song must be repeated almost innumerable times until each member of the chorus feels, as if by instinct, the precise instant of attack, the exact degree of shading in a crescendo or diminuendo and the hastening or retarding of the tempo.

IX

Pipe Organ—The pipe organ, when it seems practicable, may be studied by advanced piano pupils.

Theory of Music—Nothing is more necessary in the education of a musician than a knowledge of the laws governing the construction of music. A pupil may be taught to play, correctly, many difficult compositions without this, but, without it, he will never become an independent musician, able to understand and interpret the best music.

History of Music—The study of History of Music is of inestimable value to the music student. Our advanced pupils enjoy the advantages of class work in this subject.

Music as a Profession—Not only is the musical profession one of the most remunerative which our pupils can adopt, and many of our former students have become successful teachers and performers, but the attainments of voice or instrument have added much to their own pleasure as well as that of their circle of friends. From an aesthetic standpoint the refining,

elevating influence of the best music can scarcely be estimated.

Environment, suggestion and imitation are most important factors in the development of the child's mind, in music as in other subjects, and his musical education depends largely upon the impressions he receives during his formative years.

How truly has Herbert Spencer said: "Education is preparation to live completely," and no less true are the words of someone who said: "Music is allied to the higher sentiments of man's moral nature, love of God, love of country, love of friends."

A BLIND GIRL'S EDUCATION

ROBERT W. WOOLSTON

MANY years ago I had the pleasure of visiting in a beautiful farm home, and now note with interest the changes that have taken place in that family with the passing years.

At the time of my visit the family consisted of the father, a fine, successful business man, the mother, devoted to her home and family, two husky lads of nine and seven years of age, respectively, and two beautiful little girls, five and three years old.

A guest entering that home would notice at once the devotion of the entire family to the little brown-eyed girl of five years. It would seem that they, the family, anticipated and administered her every want. She was not ill, yet her baby sister brought her a drink of water and fondled and petted her as she sat on her mother's lap. The mother stood the little girl on the floor and asked her to come over and speak to me. She walked toward me with outstretched hands, showing that she was afraid of falling or getting hurt. She was blind. The older brother came to her assistance. The mother explained that her little daughter was blinded by accident in infancy, and her oculist had advised her that the little girl could never see again.

Four years prior to that time the little girl, then a babe one year of age, fell on a toy with which she was playing. Inflammation first blinded the injured eye. Had the injured eye been removed it is probable that the vision of the uninjured eye would have remained unimpaired, but the eye was not removed and, sad to state, the inflammation destroyed the vision in both eyes. In an accident like this, the parents should rely wholly on the advice of a competent oculist and consent to have the operation performed at once. This little girl, Ruth by name, could not remember ever seeing. She was, indeed, like a hothouse plant in her family. She was not permitted to do anything for herself, everything was done for her, but the time was not far away when, of necessity, the situation in the family circle must change, and the very kindnesses and loving care resulted in a real hardship for her. Her brothers and sister romped and played in the fields and meadows, they had their pets among the stock on the farm, they had their kites and sleds and ponies. The boys rode their ponies to school, two miles distant.

When the very active lives of these hearty farm children were contrasted with the listless, inactive one of the little blind sister, the seriousness of the affliction was more keenly felt. She was not taught to run and play and laugh and sing. Every movement seemed to be restricted and the real joy of childhood repressed. The time came all too soon when the younger

sister started to school. These little children rode away in a cart to school early in the morning. To shorten a lonely day, Ruth was permitted and encouraged to lie in bed until ten o'clock in the morning. At rising time the devoted mother would dress Ruth and feed her her breakfast.

The family had never seen another blind child; they did not know that Ruth could be taught to dress herself, to go through the house unaided, to assist with the housework, to skip and play and enjoy outdoor life. She wondered why she could not ride the pony, why she could not go to school, why she was not like the other children. What did it mean to see? How many hours she sat alone, afraid to move about, yet every muscle tense with pent up energy! How much she should have been learning during those first seven years of her life! Her parents should have given her just the same treatment that they gave the other children.

The parents often spoke of this afflicted child. How dear she was to them! They prayed that her vision might be restored and they worked hard to provide for her future. The greatest assurance for this child's future would have been a careful training, the result of which would have been resourcefulness and capability, the same resourcefulness that was manifest in the other children. Careful, painstaking training would have brought this child's intelligence to the foreground, and her affliction would have become less and less noticeable. But, as these seven years passed, the parents noticed that Ruth was not as interesting to friends and neighbors as in former days. It then occurred to them that it was the child that was acquiring something each day of the year, who had something of interest to say and to give out to others, who was alert of mind, that attracted and held attention and made friends. So they saw that their afflicted child, though growing in years, was losing ground. The three other children, engaged in their own activities, the chores on the farm, and school work and play, were perhaps not less in sympathy with their sister, but very much less attentive to her. The mother and father were too busy with the many farm duties to give her the usual attention or to answer her numerous questions.

As I think of this little girl, unable to engage in any of the activities of the home or the farm or the school, alone so much, the words of Helen Keller came to my mind: "The great burden of the blind is not blindness, but idleness."

If parents of blind children could realize how much early training means to make the afflicted child normal in appearance and behavior, and capable of filling a useful little niche in the household, thus alleviating the sorrows of the whole family, no effort would be spared in this early education. How wholesome it always sounds to hear a blind child talking about the birds, flowers and trees, about the fruit and the vegetables and farm products, his whole mind filled with the environment in which he has lived. He does not have to see all these things with the physical eyes to enjoy and appreciate them. He is certain that they are around about him and his mind is alert even though his eyes are blind.

II

The parents were strong and courageous enough to face the inevitable. Training, education, now became the paramount subject in the family. Where and how could Ruth be taught? A letter finally came to the State School for the Blind in Jacksonville, Illinois, stating that Ruth would enter the school the following September. The day for opening the school term arrived and with it came Ruth and her father and mother. She was delighted with all the excitement of her first day in school. She was shown to her room and met her little roommates, met her teachers, was shown the equipment of the classroom. Everything, of course, was new to her, the time passed quickly and the hour for her parents' departure came all too soon, but she, like them, had prepared for the parting hour.

The following morning found her in the classroom, where her teacher acquainted her with many subjects which surrounded her.

Her education must be obtained through the sense perception of her finger tips. How interesting she was, how willing and eager to learn! On the farm she had been surrounded by many birds and had heard them sing, but she could not imagine how they appeared. She began to examine mounted birds, to learn their sizes, colors, forms and weights. She was shown how they could run and hop and how they could spread their wings and sail through the air. As her little fingers passed over the forms of these mounted birds, her face beamed with real satisfaction. She was now learning things that she had wondered about so long. If there is one subject that interests little children, especially little blind children, more than any other it is birds. The fact that they cannot see them does not lessen their desire to know all about them. On the schoolgrounds and in the parks they learn to distinguish the various kinds of birds by their songs. Blind children depend on the sense of hearing to a far greater extent than sighted children and thus hear many bird songs that escape the ears of sighted children. Ruth was introduced first to the subject of birds because her teacher, experienced in teaching blind children, knew that it would be of greatest interest to her.

How barren must be the mind of a child that has not had access to the many beautifully colored picture books! Can we wonder then that Ruth was continually asking questions about all the domestic and wild animals? The weeks have now passed and each day the sense perception of her finger tips has become keener and more capable.

After learning many birds she turned to a large group of mounted animals, both wild and domestic, examining first the least animals, like the mouse, rat, squirrel, chipmunk, rabbit, monkey, and coon, until she had reached the largest, like the lion and elephant. All were mounted. Later she examined the larger ones in miniature form. How do we know that she formed the correct image? An oral examination determined that to a certain extent. To further impress the picture of these animals upon her mind she was required to model each animal in clay; this, of course, was the best

test as to the accuracy of the child's images.

Many minerals were laid before her. As she learned the name of each, its usefulness was explained. Samples of various kinds of grain were given her in little boxes and she soon became familiar with all.

Months have passed and yet Ruth's picture book of mounted birds, mounted domestic and wild animals, fish, flowers, fruits and grains, which she has been "seeing" with her fingers, still lies open before her with much more in store for her hungry mind.

Objective instruction aroused her interest in everything around her. It stimulated her desire to read herself, instead of having her teacher read for her.

Vacation came. Ruth looked forward to going home to see her family and the members of her family counted the days as anxiously as she did. On the closing day of the term, both her father and mother came to the school to accompany her home. What a joyful meeting, filled with tears and laughter! Could it be Ruth? How she had grown!

How fast time flies and how fast children grow! The summer on the farm, romping and playing with her brothers and sisters, was only a pleasant memory and my pupil was back at her desk in the classroom. Her delicate, sensitive fingers have learned to read Braille, which is a system of raised dots by which blind children are educated. Did she learn it quickly? No. Did it require patience? Yes, much care and patience were exercised. With the tips of her fingers she was required to determine the letters of the alphabet, each of which is a particular combination of tiny raised dots not larger than a pin head. This Braille system was the foundation of her education and it paid to be careful and patient. At last it was learned and then came that great satisfaction of acquiring knowledge from story books. She learned to spell all the names of her dumb mounted pets, birds and animals.

But Ruth must tell her family at home on the farm many of the incidents of her school life. And with reading and spelling she was taught to write Braille. This she did with a slate and stylus. Her family could not read Braille but her teacher interlined the letters in script and by this method the family and pupil were kept in direct touch with one another.

After reading, writing and spelling came the numerals. To learn them was not difficult for the numbers in Braille are made by letters of the alphabet with the numeral sign preceding them. Then came the introduction of arithmetic. Wooden blocks of different kinds and sizes and geometrical figures were given and used to good advantage. The work was, at first, like play, but later it became real work.

Must our pupil always ask someone else what time it is because she cannot see? Independence of action, self-reliance, like that of her brothers and sisters, were Ruth's ambition and delight and now she must learn to tell the time of day. She had learned the numerals. The Braille numerals from one to twelve were placed on the face of the clock. She was taught that the minute hand moved from twelve to twelve while the hour hand moved from twelve to one

to make an hour. She could easily feel the Braille numerals on the face of the clock. She learned the hours and minutes exactly. Then, from time to time the size of the clock's face was diminished and the lessons repeated. Then she was given a watch with the crystal removed having the Braille numerals instead of the Roman. Her wrist watch became her friend that told her the time of day. The cultivation of a delicate sense perception is to the blind what keen sight is to the sighted person.

Now, with a knowledge of her environment, a familiarity with things and their use, able to read, write and work arithmetic, what was to hinder her from being educated?

Her text books in Braille corresponded to those in print used by her brothers and sister and they often compared stories. Among children's great heroes in this country are Washington, Lincoln and Grant. Children at home talked much about the pictures of these great statesmen. Our little blind girl, of course, could not see them. The busts of these national heroes stood in her classroom. She studied their features carefully, line by line, until she could give a very clear description of each. We cannot say how accurate her mental images of them were, but it is evident that she felt she had seen them and, therefore, knew them better.

Every lesson that she learned made the next one easier. The early sense perception lessons in the primary school were the foundation for her courses in geography, typewriting geometry and handwork. Through several years of her elementary education she depended, to a great extent, on sense perception. She would stand by the relief maps and globes, outline the countries of the earth, locate their principal cities, trace mountains, lakes and rivers. She would supplement this knowledge by use of Braille textbooks in geography. I believe that her knowledge in various subjects was equivalent to that of sighted girls in parallel grades. All her map work in geography brought into use her early training in sense perception. She found great satisfaction in her ability to step up to a map or a globe and locate the point under discussion in the classroom. Each preceding lesson requiring carefully trained fingers was an asset to her now.

The early sense perception training with flowers, grains, vegetables, birds, animals, and busts, which was so pleasant and fascinating, was for a greater purpose than mere pleasure. It was the beginning of co-ordination of hand and mind. It was very essential as it was the foundation of a system by which she was to develop her mind throughout life.

I would not have my readers think that Ruth's education was easy and delightful from first to last. Passing from the objective lessons to the abstract, and reading many books in Braille, required much time and patience and labor on her part. Her training in the elementary school was very much like that of her brothers' and sister's at home, her course of study and the length of time required to accomplish it were just the same.

With each summer vacation the family realized that their little girl's affliction was less noticeable, that she had things in common with the rest of the family. In the mornings she was

up bright and early, dressed herself and went down to breakfast with the other children. In school she had learned to measure space and distances. She had gone by herself from building to building on the school grounds and now at home she went from room to room in the house, enjoyed the beautiful lawn, moved about, not dependent, but independently.

Her healthy, optimistic view of life, though still a little girl, has greatly lightened the sorrow which blindness brings to the family.

This little girl supplemented her elementary academic course with a thorough course in home economics. She learned to sew, crochet, knit, make baskets and weave beautiful fine fabrics. When her books were laid aside her fingers could still be busily engaged. All these things added to her accomplishments and gave her poise. She was careful with reference to her manners and particularly about her table etiquette. She said that it was at the dinner table that people judged her as either an accomplished or an unaccomplished girl.

Eight years had passed, Ruth had reached her fifteenth year and completed the work in the elementary school. During these years she had had three lessons each week in Physical Culture. She had learned to walk well and with assurance, to sit erect, to hold her head up, to listen with attention and to appear as though she were not blind. Through the use of Indian clubs, dumb bells, wands, parallel bars and other gymnastic equipment she became alert and natural in her movements and appearance.

She now entered upon the four year high school course in the School for the Blind, supplementing it with a course in piano. She was anxious to become a typist, and so typewriting was one of the subjects which she carried through her entire high school course, giving forty minutes to it each day. The piano lessons and typewriting lessons were each an aid to the other. It was not long before she was able to prepare her English and History lessons in type rather than Braille; this enlightened the teachers' work and at the same time gave Ruth splendid experience practicing on the L. C. Smith typewriter, using the touch system on the regular keyboard as do sighted stenographers. The Braille letters which she had been mailing home each week were discontinued and now very nice typewritten letters took their place. It may be stated here that Ruth, through her painstaking typewriting course, was building better than she knew.

Her early sense perception training proved to be invaluable to her all through school, but nowhere did she appreciate its importance more than in plane geometry. Her high school course was built on the subjects required for college entrance and plane geometry was one of them that brought into use considerable ingenuity. It was her task to construct in raised lines the geometrical figures. This she did by first learning the theorum and forming the image in her mind. Then by the use of a pattern tracer she embossed the figures, lettered the angles, traced the lines and gave the oral solution of the problem. Perhaps geometry, algebra and Latin were her most difficult subjects. Her

four years of High School English were afterwards put into telling and practical use, a use quite different from college pre-requisites as she had anticipated. General Science, History, Civics and Economics all had their cultural value.

At nineteen years of age she had completed her course and was graduated from high school. Two years previous to that time her father on the farm, like many a farmer after the world war, had met with serious business reverses. Gradually it had been impressed upon her mind that she must not look to him for a college education; in fact, straitened circumstances gave him much concern regarding his daughter's future. Since she could not afford to go to college, she was invited to return to the School for the Blind to pursue a Post-Graduate course in Dictaphone Operating. Being a good speller and a splendid typist already, this course was not difficult. She applied herself to this work in connection with Business English for one year and was ready for a Dictaphone position.

III

We shall not soon forget with what great joy she and her friends in the school received the news that a firm in Peoria, Illinois, would give her a position in its Dictaphone Department. She eagerly accepted the offer (realizing her limited opportunities) and was in the Peoria office at the time fixed by her employer. All her friends in the school were saying what a fortunate girl Ruth was to have such a good job. But only two days later a telegram was received from her firm, asking us to meet her at the train in Jacksonville. What a sad, depressed, dejected girl we met. I shall never forget the pathetic expression of that blind girl as she stepped from the train. Tears came to her eyes as she told us that she had lost her job. No one had the heart to ask her for an explanation. We walked from the train to the school in silence, feeling certain that the fault did not lie with our once courageous, faithful student.

A letter was received the following morning from the Peoria firm stating that Ruth was a good Dictaphone operator and that her work during those two days was satisfactory in every respect, but that the man who had employed her had neglected to state that she would need to do filing as well as typing. Filing, of course, was out of the question for her. In its endeavor to place a number of Dictaphone operators, the school had made application with many firms in Illinois. Ruth continued her course, working and practicing constantly and waiting for another call. Within a short time, through the businesslike solicitation of a Social Service Worker, a position was found for her with a splendid firm in Alton, Illinois. She made good. Her careful, painstaking work pleased her employer and her typing was often shown with much pride to men who visited his office, saying: "This work was done by a young lady who is totally blind." She has remained in that position for five years, and at the end of each week, during all those years, she has received a check for twenty-five dollars. She has lived in the Y. W. C. A. not far from her employment where she has many friends.

She has been a very active church worker. Her knowledge of music and her ability to play the piano have assisted her socially.

Blindness is a handicap, but it is not an insurmountable one. This young lady has done as well, if not better, than the other children in the family. Since leaving school she has earned her own livelihood and saved money besides.

This is the story of Ruth's accomplishments and also the story of many other blind girls like her.

TRAINING FOR THE BLIND BOY

ROBERT W. WOOLSTON

WHEN a blind boy enters the State School at Jacksonville, he, like the ninety out of every hundred, will ask this question: "What can I learn that will help me earn a living?" He may be only a small boy yet he seems to be greatly concerned about the future.

This anxiety may be due to two reasons. At his home, perhaps, he has heard much about the large sums of money spent in the effort to restore his vision and realizes the straitened financial circumstances of his family, or he may fully understand at his early age, how the industrial and professional activities for him are limited and with what difficulty it is that the blind secure employment at all. And so the question uppermost in his mind is how he can become able to earn a livelihood.

One rarely meets a blind boy who does not have this real ambition to do something worth while, to fill a useful niche and through his usefulness gain the respect of his friends and neighbors. He may not care at all to enter the school for the purpose of obtaining an education, yet when advised that perhaps he can learn a trade that will bring him some money, he shows an interest and begins to give his parents better cooperation and often the industrial trade held before him is the inducement that brings him to school.

However, the school functions primarily for the purpose of giving each child a good, thorough education which prepares him to enter college if he chooses to do so, and not necessarily to teach him a trade. It is easier to assure him of an education than a trade that will always mean his livelihood, yet as a supplement to his literary education the trade may be learned by the blind boy who has ability to adapt himself to it. It is the general opinion of those who educate the blind that every able-bodied blind boy ought to be trained so that he will contribute something towards his own support.

The young blind are eager and ambitious and should be encouraged while young to strive to maintain throughout life the honor that comes through labor, their own labor. The schools which train the blind youth of the country are constantly holding before them the necessity of doing some kind of work if they would maintain a proper respectable standard. When a young person settles down to live wholly on a pension, or depend on relatives, his usefulness is greatly curtailed, if not ended. It might be far better for him to be content with less than the normal wage and live within more restricted means.

The thought should be instilled in the mind of every blind boy by his family and his school that education

is the essential foundation for the trade or the profession which he hopes to enter. School records will verify the statement that a blind boy who enters the school promptly, attends regularly and is a good student, has no real, serious difficulty in adjusting himself, in case he does not intend to take advantage of a college education, to a trade that will mean at least something to him financially after he has left the school, provided he has stamina and perseverance.

II

Then what shall we do for this ambitious boy and how shall we advise him?

In the opinion of most teachers it would depend largely on the ability of the boy as to how he should be persuaded and guided in his courses. First, all blind boys and girls (with few exceptions) should enter the school with the thought of completing the entire course which embraces the primary, elementary and the four year high school courses. This conclusion is drawn from the success of high school graduates in contrast with the failures of those who come and go with no definite purpose in mind.

There lies before the high school graduate a college course which is possible for him to have if he and his family strive to do their part.

At the present time there are twenty-two blind young men and women in Illinois who are pursuing courses in higher education. The State is very much interested in their successful careers and is contributing towards that success. Each one of these twenty-two college students receives aid in the amounts of from thirty-five to forty-five dollars a month during the entire college course.

The question is often asked now, "What will they do when they are through college?" They are studying law, osteopathy, theology, education and music. Will they be successful? They will enter their respective professions and if we may rely on the success of those efficient professional blind people whom we know, our answer is in the affirmative.

But only a few attend college. Then what can we do for the blind boy who cannot have higher education or even a high school training?

Not all boys, but nearly every boy can supplement the elementary schooling with some kind of useful industrial work that will be of financial aid to him.

If he has patience and persistence, he can be taught piano tuning which is no mean trade for the efficient young man. This trade can be learned in about three years, carried in connection with his literary work. Upon its completion, he ought to be able to earn from twenty to thirty dollars a week in a factory or in his home community, depending of course, upon his ability to tune.

Again, not all who desire to do so can become piano tuners; they may have neither the ear nor the mechanical ability to repair. Yet fifteen percent of the boys enrolled in the School for the Blind are fortunate enough to be able to complete a course in tuning. He is a fortunate boy who becomes an able, efficient piano tuner and he may be more or less independent in earning a livelihood.

The blind boy who has neither the ability to tune nor repair a piano represents another and a larger class and the teachers are striving to devise means and ways by which he may find himself. To be able to use one's hands to good advantage is no small task for many a blind boy, and since any industrial work depends on skillful, useful hands, he may have much to overcome. Weaving baskets may appeal to this lad and it is good hand training, too. The materials are not expensive nor are they wasted when the work must be undone. The article is also useful and there is a market for it.

Then, too, there is chair caning. This is a good trade to carry in connection with basketry. The two trades can be done at home without special equipment and orders can be solicited from the community. In addition to these two trades the manufacture of fibre furniture has proved to be rather profitable. It is all hand work and is not difficult to learn. Therefore, the boy who does not find it possible to do salesmanship, dictaphone operating or piano tuning to earn an independent living, can often follow some of the lesser trades mentioned above, making and selling useful articles and contributing something at least, towards his support.

Thus to this anxious, ambitious blind boy who is concerned about his future and who is ever asking, "What can I do to earn a living?", the teacher can say:

"First, get a good, thorough high school education, if possible, for it is essential as a foundation. Second, supplement it with one of the following trades: dictaphone operating, piano tuning, manufacturing of brushes and brooms, furniture making, basketry, chair caning and weaving. And third, after the trade is learned, apply it and work diligently and earn whatever you can, whether that be much or little."

Yet after all is said, the blind boy's question, "What can I do to earn a living?", is not satisfactorily answered in many instances.

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